

Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to speak to the necessity and importance of a continuation of funding for the Upper Kanawha Valley Enterprise Community program.

I am Kent Carper, a Kanawha County Commissioner since 1996. We applied for and did not receive designation in Round 1. When we were first notified of the Round II funding, we continued our diligent work with the community to determine what the needs were and continue to be today. When the notification was received that the UKVEC had received the EC designation, the County thought it was necessary and beneficial to hire staff and provide equipment, in order that when the federal dollars were disbursed we could hit the ground running.

The Upper Kanawha Valley Enterprise Community is an area of pervasive poverty, high unemployment, and general distress.

Kanawha County used local tax dollars to begin implementation of the strategic vision for change. We know first hand, the poverty and devastation that our area suffers from. We have lost hundreds of coal mining jobs and 500 jobs in the chemical industry. Both the housing stock and resident population have suffered significant losses during the past 40 years.

Over a quarter of a million local tax dollars have been dispersed in the Upper Kanawha Valley, because we believe this area can survive and rebuild. But, we can't do this alone. We need the continued commitment from the federal government to fund this program, so that dollars spent in the Upper Kanawha Valley can continue to leverage additional dollars to improve the quality of life and break the cycle of poverty.

Congresswoman Capito has worked as a partner with us to send a clear message that this a program of vital importance to the continued development of the Upper Kanawha Valley.

The Kanawha County Commission is strongly committed to this program and has supported their endeavors to bring new jobs,

affordable housing, and continued economic development to the Upper Kanawha Valley.

Thank you very much.